

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0562
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PARM US UK UR
SUBJECT: CTB NEGOTIATIONS: POLITICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING,
JUNE 5, 1978

CTB MESSAGE NO. 230

1. SUMMARY. CONTINUING DISCUSSION OF EVIDENCE REQUIRED FOR OSI, SOVIET EXPERTS PRESENTED ON JUNE 5 EXTENSIVE ARGUMENTATION ON WHY SEISMIC EVIDENCE MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY OSI REQUEST. THEY CLAIMED THAT OTHER EVIDENCE ALONE WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH THE TIME OF AN EXPLOSION AND THEREBY COMPLICATE VERIFICATION. NEIDLE AND GILLER (US) PROVIDED DETAILED RESPONSE, EMPHASIZING THAT PARTIES SHOULD BE ABLE TO REQUEST AN OSI IF THEY HAVE OTHER SERIOUS EVIDENCE, EVEN IF IT DOES NOT INCLUDE SEISMIC. TIMERBAEV (USSR) WHO EARLIER INDICATED HIS EXPERTS WANTED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR CASE, SAID THE SOVIETS WOULD CONSIDER THE MATTER FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT JUNE 5 MEETING, MYASNIKOV (USSR) READ A PREPARED STATEMENT ARGUING THAT SEISMIC EVIDENCE COULD ESTABLISH THE TIME AND LOCATION OF A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AND THUS SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR ANY OSI REQUEST. THE USE, WITHOUT SEISMIC EVIDENCE, OF OTHER EVIDENCE, WHICH MIGHT APPEAR LONG AFTER AN EXPLOSION, MIGHT NOT IN SOME CASES EVEN ESTABLISH WHETHER THE EXPLOSION TOOK PLACE BEFORE OR AFTER

ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE TREATY. THE US APPROACH IMPLIED THAT SUBSIDENCE CRATERS COULD SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR AN OSI REQUEST, BUT THESE CRATERS CAN RESULT FROM ENGINEERING WORK OR NATURAL CAUSES. OSI REQUESTS BASED ON PHOTOGRAPHS OF SUCH CRATERS OR OF CRATERS CAUSED BY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS WOULD COMPLICATE VERIFICATION, PARTICULARLY SINCE A CRATER FROM AN EXPLOSION THAT OCCURRED BEFORE ENTRY INTO FORCE COULD APPEAR AT A LATER TIME. IN THIS CASE, AN OSI COULD FIND EVIDENCE OF A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, BUT WITHOUT SEISMIC EVIDENCE IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION.

3. IN RESPONSE, NEIDLE SAID THAT THE US VIEWS OSI NOT ONLY AS A MECHANISM OF REASSURANCE THAT THE TREATY WOULD BE OBSERVED, BUT ALSO AS AN AGREED FORM OF DETERRENCE AGAINST VIOLATIONS. EVERYONE KNEW THAT THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF STUDY ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS COULD BE CARRIED OUT WITH REDUCED SEISMIC SIGNALS. THERE WAS A SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF BELIEF THAT IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR EXAMPLE, BY CARRYING OUT EXPLOSIONS IN LARGE CAVITIES, SEISMIC SIGNALS COULD BE REDUCED BELOW THE POINT OF DETECTION. WHILE NOT WISHING TO IMPLY THIS WOULD HAPPEN, WE BELIEVED IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT AN OSI WOULD BE POSSIBLE SHOULD THERE BE SERIOUS NON-SEISMIC EVIDENCE THAT A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED.

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4. NEIDLE ALSO NOTED THAT, IN THE EVENT OF A NUCLEAR TEST, RADIOACTIVITY COULD BE RELEASED ACCIDENTALLY AND MAKE ITS WAY TO A BORDER. DETECTION OF RADIOACTIVITY COULD RAISE QUESTIONS AND CREATE A SITUATION WHERE IT WOULD BE UNNATURAL NOT TO BE ABLE TO PURSUE QUESTIONS, AND POSSIBLY AN OSI PURSUANT TO TREATY PROVISIONS, SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF SEISMIC EVIDENCE. THE PROBLEM OF LATE CRATER SUBSIDENCE, WHICH HE UNDERSTOOD WAS UNUSUAL, COULD CONCEIVABLY BE RELEVANT AT THE OUTSET OF THE TREATY BUT NOT SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THE TREATY ENTERED INTO FORCE. MOREOVER, IF A QUESTION WAS RAISED AS A RESULT OF SUCH SUBSIDENCE, SHORTLY AFTER THE TREATY ENTERED INTO FORCE, A PARTY SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN THAT THE CRATER RELATED TO AN EVENT BEFORE THE TREATY. NEIDLE, RESPONDING TO MYASNIKOV'S COMMENT THAT THE PARTIES COULD RUN INTO DIFFICULTY IF THEY DISREGARDED SEISMIC EVIDENCE, EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS CLEARLY NOT THE US INTENTION TO DISREGARD SEISMIC EVIDENCE. IN THE PHRASE "INCLUDING RELEVANT SEISMIC OR OTHER PHYSICAL EVIDENCE", WE HAD PLACED THE WORD "SEISMIC" FIRST, THEREBY GIVING IT PRIDE OF PLACE. THERE WERE, IN FACT, THREE POSSIBLE SITUATIONS REGARDING

EVIDENCE AND A REQUEST FOR OSI: (A) SEISMIC EVIDENCE ONLY, (B) SEISMIC AND OTHER PHYSICAL EVIDENCE, OR (C) OTHER PHYSICAL EVIDENCE WITH NO SEISMIC EVIDENCE. IN THIS LAST CASE, THE THEORETICAL COMPARATIVE MERITS OF SEISMIC EVIDENCE AND OTHER EVIDENCE SIMPLY WERE NOT RELEVANT: THE "OTHER EVIDENCE" WAS THE ONLY EVIDENCE AND PARTIES SHOULD NOT BE PRECLUDED FROM SEEKING AN OSI SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAD NO AVAILABLE SEISMIC EVIDENCE.

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5. GILLER (US) NOTED THAT THERE WOULD OF COURSE BE CONSULTATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH ANY EVIDENCE THAT MIGHT BE PRESENTED AND THAT IF SUCH EVIDENCE WAS PHOTOGRAPHIC, AN EXPLANATION FOR THE OSI REQUEST WOULD BE PROVIDED AND THE REQUEST WOULD NOT BE BASED SIMPLY ON A SINGLE PHOTOGRAPH. GILLER SAID THAT IN US EXPERIENCE CRATERS CREATED BY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS USUALLY COLLAPSE IN MINUTES FOLLOWING THE EXPLOSION. SOME COLLAPSED HOURS FOLLOWING AN EXPLOSION, AND HE COULD RECALL ONLY ONE CASE IN WHICH A CRATER SUBSIDED ONE YEAR FOLLOWING THE EXPLOSION. GILLER ADDED THAT IT SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE POSSIBLE TO DATE THE TIME OF A TEST THROUGH RADIO CHEMISTRY.

6. FAKLEY (UK) EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR US ARGUMENTS AND SAID THAT WHILE IT WAS TRUE THAT PHOTOGRAPHS ENTAIL UNCERTAINTIES, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT SEISMIC SIGNALS ALSO ENTAIL UNCERTAINTIES. SEISMIC SIGNALS WERE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IN ESTABLISHING THE TIME OF AN EVENT, BUT PHOTOS

COULD BE HELPFUL IN INDICATING THE PLACE.

7. TIMERBAEV (USSR) SAID THAT THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF THE
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COMPOSITE TEXT CALLED FOR CONSULTATIONS. HOWEVER, THE
NEXT STEP, IN PARAGRAPH TWO, STATING THE BASIS FOR
REQUESTING OSI, WOULD BE A SERIOUS STEP AND THEREFORE
SHOULD BE BASED ON THE MOST SERIOUS EVIDENCE.

8. NEIDLE AGREED THAT A REQUEST FOR OSI WOULD BE A SERIOUS
STEP, BUT DISAGREED REGARDING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS
FORESEEN IN THE TEXT. TWO STAGES OF CONSULTATION WERE
ENVISAGED. IN THE FIRST STEP A QUESTION RAISED BY ONE
PARTY MIGHT BE TAKEN CARE OF BEFORE ANY EVIDENCE WAS
PRESENTED. BUT, IF QUESTIONS REMAINED, IT SHOULD BE
POSSIBLE TO REQUEST OSI ON THE BASIS OF SEISMIC AND/OR
NON-SEISMIC EVIDENCE. FOLLOWING THIS, THE COMPOSITE TEXT
IN PARA 3, PICKING UP A SUGGESTION FROM THE SOVIET DEL,
PROVIDES FOR THE SECOND STAGE OF CONSULTATIONS AT WHICH
TIME ANY PROBLEMS IN THE EVIDENCE COULD BE DISCUSSED AND
IT COULD STILL BE DETERMINED THAT AN OSI WASN'T NEEDED.

9. TIMERBAEV CONCLUDED BY EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR
THE US AND UK VIEWS, WHICH HE SAID HIS DELEGATION WOULD
CONSIDER CAREFULLY. WARNKE

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